

9 Steps of Office Paper Recycling

Maine State Planning Office

Waste Management & Recycling Program



STEP 1. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO RECYCLE

Top level management must support the recycling program.

STEP 2. APPOINT A RECYCLING COORDINATOR

A responsible and enthusiastic recycling coordinator is crucial to success. The time needed by the coordinator is usually minimal and occurs primarily at the beginning of the program. Once operational, the program will be largely self-sustaining.

STEP 3. CARRY OUT A WASTE PAPER AUDIT

Knowing what is in your waste stream is essential in designing a recycling program. An audit will help you determine the composition of your waste stream, including the type, value and amount of waste paper generated by your organization.

The most effective method of auditing your waste paper stream is to manually sort it over a specified period of time. Your company's procurement records can also help you determine what paper you might generate. Finally, estimate your recyclable paper generation at 0.5 lbs. to 1.0 lbs. per employee per day.

STEP 4. RESEARCH MARKETS FOR YOUR RECYCLABLE PAPER

Make sure that you will have a place to take your recyclable paper before starting your program. The State Planning Office, Waste Management and Recycling Program publishes a listing of paper brokers in Maine. Contact the brokers in your area.

To determine who is best suited to handle your material, ask brokers the following questions: what materials are accepted? what financial benefits are offered? what services are available? Check references.

Small companies need to make recycling more efficient. Contact your town office to see if the town recycles office paper or offers any business services. Combine forces with other firms in your area to increase volumes. Brokers like dependable deliveries and large volumes.

STEP 5. DECIDE WHAT TYPES OF PAPER TO COLLECT

After evaluating the types of paper in your waste stream and finding out what kinds will be accepted by brokers or local recycling programs, determine the types of paper you want to collect. Focus on the higher value papers and those which make up the bulk of your waste paper stream.

STEP 6. ESTABLISH AN EFFICIENT COLLECTION SYSTEM

Prior to initiating your new recycling program, set up a formal collection system. Your existing trash collection system should provide the foundation for your recycling program. Always involve custodial personnel in the design of your collection system as they will be responsible for its implementation.

Provide employees with a recycling container for their paper and a waste basket for non-recyclable materials. You may also choose to place recycling containers in areas where paper is generated such as near computer printers or copying machines.

You will need storage containers sized to hold the amount of paper materials you collect and located where they are easily accessible by your broker or hauler.

STEP 7. EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Employee education and cooperation is essential for a successful recycling program. Plan on starting your educational campaign a week or so before the program kick-off. The purpose of this campaign is to prepare your employees for participation in the recycling program.

Explain the goals and methods of the program to employees prior to implementation. Develop brief orientation sessions for all employees. Distribute a simple, concise information sheet on your recycling program. Create incentives for your employees to recycle. Remember to always make it clear that the program has the support of senior management.

STEP 8. KICK OFF YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM

This is the simplest step in implementing your program -- just pick a date, have a celebration and start recycling.

STEP 9. MAINTAIN YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM

Maintenance and continued promotion are essential to ensure a lasting, successful recycling program. Issue memos, newsletter articles and announcements on a regular basis. Monitor central container locations and prepare follow-up educational materials if you discover a contamination problem. Maintain clear, concise signs in all locations. Include office paper recycling training for all new employees. Keep a record of what and how much office paper you are recycling to use to evaluate your program and provide feedback to employees. Have your recycling coordinator spend a few hours each month keeping the program going smoothly.

For more information, please contact:
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